

a border at least partially surrounding the display, the border comprising a plurality of lamps of multiple colors, the lamps being selectively illuminated, pursuant to signals from the processing circuitry, to create a plurality of visual effects that change based on variable aspects of the gaming machine during operation.

2. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the lamps comprise light emitting diodes.

3. The gaming system of Claim 2 wherein the light emitting diodes are red, blue, and green light emitting diodes.

4. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the border further comprises a semi-transparent cover covering the lamps.

5. The gaming system of Claim 4 wherein the cover comprises a light diffuser.

6. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein said processing circuitry comprises a border controller, said system further comprising a plurality of conductors connecting the lamps to the border controller.

7. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the memory contains instructions for carrying out the following method performed by the gaming system:

displaying a first screen of a game;
activating lamps in the border in a first manner;
receiving an instruction from a player;
determining an outcome of the game following the instruction; and
activating lamps in the border in a second manner, different from the first manner, when the outcome is a winning outcome.

8. The gaming system of Claim 7 wherein the memory contains instructions for carrying out the following method performed by the gaming machine:

activating lamps in the border in a third manner, different from the first manner and second manner, when the outcome is a losing outcome.

9. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the memory contains instructions for carrying out the following method performed by the gaming machine:

displaying a first screen of a game on a first portion of the display;

activating a first portion of the lamps in the border, wherein the first portion of lamps are adjacent to the first portion of the display;

displaying a second screen of a game on a second portion of the display; and

activating a second portion of the lamps in the border, wherein the second portion of the lamps are adjacent to the second portion of the display.

10. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the memory contains instructions for carrying out the following method performed by the gaming machine:

activating at least a portion of the lamps in the border; and

determining the brightness of the activated lamps based on an amount bet by a player.

11. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the memory contains instructions for carrying out the following method performed by the gaming machine:

activating at least a portion of the lamps in the border; and

determining the brightness of the activated lamps based on a number of activated pay lines.

12. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the memory contains instructions for carrying out the following method performed by the gaming machine:

displaying a first screen of a game, the first screen comprising a plurality of regions adjacent the border, each region corresponding to a winning amount;

flashing a plurality of lamps in succession, each flashing lamp being adjacent to one of the plurality of regions;

receiving an instruction to stop flashing;

causing a payout mechanism to pay an amount corresponding to a winning amount in a region adjacent to a last lamp illuminated prior to said receiving an instruction to stop flashing.

13. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein said display comprises a video display.

14. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the processing circuitry comprises a border driver connected to the border.

15. The gaming system of Claim 13 wherein the processing circuitry comprises a CPU coupled to the memory.

16. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise changes in a status of the gaming system.

17. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise changing aspects of a game being played on the gaming system.

18. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise a jackpot being obtained by a player.

19. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise at least one reel spinning.

20. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise a win by a player requiring an attendant to attend to the player.

21. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the gaming system comprises a plurality of linked gaming machines, and wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise a win by a player on one of the linked machines causing the lamps on the one of the linked machines to be illuminated in a manner to distinguish the one of the linked machines from the remainder of the machines.

22. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise the start of a competitive game in a plurality of linked gaming machines.

23 The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise when a coin hopper or bill stacker in the gaming system is full or empty.

24. The gaming system of Claim 1 wherein the variable aspects of the gaming system comprise when there is a malfunction of the gaming system.

25. (Twice Amended) A method performed by a gaming machine, the gaming machine having a plurality of lamps of different colors forming a border at least partially surrounding a display of the gaming machine, the method comprising:

selectively illuminating the lamps in the border to create a plurality of visual effects that change based on aspects of the gaming machine during operation.

26. The method of Claim 25 further comprising:

displaying a first screen of a game;

activating lamps in the border in a first manner;

receiving an instruction from a player;

determining an outcome of the game following the instruction; and

activating lamps in the border in a second manner, different from the first manner, when the outcome is a winning outcome.

27. The method of Claim 26 further comprising:

activating lamps in the border in a third manner, different from the first manner and second manner, when the outcome is a losing outcome.

28. The method of Claim 25, further comprising:

displaying a first screen of a game on a first portion of the display;

activating a first portion of the lamps in the border, wherein the first portion of lamps are adjacent to the first portion of the display;

displaying a second screen of a game on a second portion of the display; and

activating a second portion of the lamps in the border, wherein the second portion of the lamps are adjacent to the second portion of the display.

29. The method of Claim 25, further comprising:

activating at least a portion of the lamps in the border; and

determining the brightness of the activated lamps based on an amount bet by a player.

30. The method of Claim 25, further comprising:

activating at least a portion of the lamps in the border; and

determining the brightness of the activated lamps based on a number of activated pay lines.

31. The method of Claim 25, further comprising:

displaying a first screen of a game, the first screen comprising a plurality of regions adjacent the border, each region corresponding to a winning amount;

flashing a plurality of lamps in succession, each flashing lamp being adjacent to one of the plurality of regions;

receiving an instruction to stop flashing; and

causing a payout mechanism to pay an amount corresponding to a winning amount in a region adjacent to a last lamp illuminated prior to said receiving an instruction to stop flashing.

32. (Amended) The gaming system of Claim 1, wherein the border comprises the plurality of lamps at least along two sides of the display.

33. (Amended) The gaming system of Claim 32, wherein the border comprises a plurality of lamps extending around adjacent sides of the display.

34. (Amended) The method of Claim 25, wherein selectively illuminating the lamps in the border comprises selectively illuminating a plurality of lamps in a border along at least two sides of the display.

35. (Amended) The method of Claim 34, wherein selectively illuminating the lamps in the border comprises selectively illuminating a plurality of lamps along at least two adjacent sides of the display.